

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of extruding a foam article, comprising:
  - 5 urging a first foam material to an extrusion channel, said first foam material having an outer surface within said extrusion channel;
  - 10 feeding a first coating material to an applicator in communication with said extrusion channel to apply a visible coating on a region of said outer surface of said first foam material within said extrusion channel, said region occupying a fraction of a perimeter of said outer surface.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising rotating said applicator relative to said first foam material about an axis parallel to the direction of travel of said first foam material through said extrusion channel proximate said applicator, thereby imparting a visible helical band on said extruded foam article.
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3. The method of claim 2, wherein said applicator forms part of an extrusion die at least partially defining said extrusion channel, and said rotating comprises rotating said extrusion die relative to said first foam material.
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4. The method of claim 3, further comprising feeding said first coating material to said applicator as a plurality of spaced flows, each flow imparting a visible helical band on said extruded foam article.
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5. The method of claim 3, further comprising feeding a second coating material to said applicator, said second coating material being visually distinct from both said first foam material and said first coating material, said second coating material imparting a visible helical band visually distinct from said visible helical band imparted by said first coating material.
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6. The method of claim 2, further comprising urging said first foam material through an extrusion outlet, and allowing said first foam material and said

coating material to expand, wherein said coating material expands with said first foam material to remain proximate a surface of said first foam material.

5    7. The method of claim 6, wherein said first foam material is foamable thermoplastic polymer, and said first coating material is a compatible material of a different color.

10    8. The method of claim 7, wherein said foamable thermoplastic polymer expands by a factor of 10 to 50 as it exits said extrusion outlet.

9. An extruded foam article formed in accordance with the method of claim 2.

10    10. A floatation aid formed in accordance with the method of claim 2.

15    11. An extrusion apparatus, comprising:

      a main die body having a first extrusion passage for allowing a flow of a first foam material to flow therethrough;

20          a rotary die body rotatably mounted to said main die body, said rotary die body having a rotary applicator aligned with said first extrusion passage of said main body;

      a secondary supply channel in flow communication with said applicator, to provide a continuous flow of a first coating material to said applicator, as said first foam material flows through said rotary applicator.

25    12. The extrusion apparatus of claim 11, wherein, said secondary supply channel comprises:

      a secondary supply channel section formed in said main die body;

30          an annular reservoir formed between said main die body and said rotary die body, said annular reservoir providing continuous flow communication to said secondary supply channel section in said main die body, as said rotary die body rotates relative to said main die body;

      at least one feed channel in fluid communication with said annular

reservoir, and providing a continuous flow of said coating material to said rotary applicator.

13. The extrusion apparatus of claim 12, comprising a plurality of spaced feed channels each providing a continuous flow of said coating material to said rotary applicator.

14. The extrusion apparatus of claim 13, wherein said rotary applicator has a generally decreasing cross-section towards an extrusion outlet.

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15. The extrusion apparatus of claim 11, comprising a bearing plate between said main die body and said rotating die body, said bearing plate having an extrusion passage aligned with said extrusion passage of said main die body, and an extrusion orifice forming a section of said secondary supply channel.

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16. The extrusion apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a second secondary supply channel providing a continuous flow of a second coating material to said rotary applicator, said secondary supply channel comprising:

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a secondary supply channel section formed in said main die body; a second annular reservoir formed between said main die body and said rotary die body, said second annular reservoir providing continuous flow communication to said second secondary supply channel section in said main die body, as said rotary die body rotates relative to said main die body;

at least one feed channel in flow communication with said second annular reservoir, and providing a continuous flow of said second coating material to said rotary applicator.

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